

# Managing the Presidency

## Bush Likes Ike as the Role Model for Administration

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**W**ASHINGTON—Looking beyond the victory he hopes to achieve in November, George Bush has a role model for the kind of President he would like to be: Dwight D. Eisenhower.

"I think he had a certain character, a certain commitment to integrity and honor, and he enjoyed a rather tranquil presidency because the problems that faced him—although the problems facing any President are great—were not overwhelming for the nation. It wasn't the most traumatic time in our history," Bush said during a recent interview with The Times when asked to name his model for the presidency.

In significant ways, Bush's choice of Eisenhower as a model sheds light on one of the most important questions facing voters as they assess the Republican ticket this fall: How would Bush manage the presidency? What kind of leadership and operating style would he use as Chief Executive? What might that mean for the country?

The answers, gleaned from the record of the vice president's long career and from interviews with many who know him well, are something of a puzzle: Even some who are close to him acknowledge that—unlike

Ronald Reagan, for example, who rose to prominence as the voice of conservative ideology—Bush's life is marked by almost no deep-rooted commitments to specific issues or government policies.

And the evidence suggests that George Bush-the-senior-government-official and George Bush-the-politician have operating styles that are very different. That, plus his lack of clear identification with fundamental beliefs and policies and his limited administrative experience, are obstacles that Bush would have to overcome in the Oval Office.

In terms of his record as a government official, the choice of Eisenhower as a model reflects an approach to leadership and management that has marked Bush's performance at almost every stage of his career. As U.N. representative, emissary to China, CIA director and vice president, Bush surrounded himself with capable aides. He showed warmth and concern in his dealings with others. He was moderate and pragmatic, shunning ideology, risk and confrontation.

He also left the nitty-gritty of government policy and administration to others.

The Washington Post  
The New York Times  
The Washington Times  
The Wall Street Journal  
The Christian Science Monitor  
New York Daily News  
USA Today  
The Chicago Tribune

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**EXCERPTED**

In the words of David Keene, a political strategist who worked for Bush in his 1980 campaign for the presidency, the vice president is a product of the Northeastern Republican good-government tradition, "more process-oriented than goal-oriented, trying to bring the best minds to bear on public policy problems." The strength of that approach is basic competence, Keene said, but the weakness may be lack of purpose and direction.

the government official has been obscured by the fact that in almost every assignment he has operated in the shadow of a more commanding public figure.

Supporters say—and even some Bush critics agree—that he has performed capably in all these assignments. But even when he ostensibly has been in charge, he has usually played a supporting role, either by choice or by force of circumstances.

As CIA director, he saw his assignment as mainly to restore the morale of an embattled agency and he generally left the task of making intelligence assessments and policy decisions to others with more expertise.

"He raised the morale of the staff enormously in a short period," said Ray Cline, a national security analyst and former director of intelligence for the State Department. "George has had a remarkable career, but you've got to recognize that none of the jobs he's held, including DCI [director of central intelligence], has been a managerial job."

### Stayed at Policy Level

George Carver, who served as a Bush deputy at the CIA, defended Bush's performance at the agency: "I would have been very disappointed if he had come in with 15 new initiatives he wanted to launch without knowing diddly about the intelligence business. He didn't do that. . . . I wouldn't call it a

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hands-off approach. But he had the sense not to go banging into things of a highly technical nature that he knew very little about. He stayed at the policy level."

People who have worked with Bush in government, when asked what kind of President he would make, respond unhesitatingly that he would bring first-rate people into his Administration, consult widely with them before making decisions, and be more compromising than combative in his approach to problem solving.

Bush, talking in some detail for the first time about how he would envision his own presidency, said: "I think you have to delegate because nobody can be expected to know everything about everything. Government is too complex, the problems too enormous. But I think I'd be good in setting a philosophical direction, setting certain objectives, delegating authority and then staying in touch and I've always done that, in something as complicated as the CIA, or for the short period of time I was in business."

Associates also say Bush would be more hands-on than Reagan, whose extraordinarily detached management style was cited by the Tower Commission as a major contributing factor in the development of the Iran-Contra scandal. At the same time, they say Bush as President would be more detached than Jimmy Carter, who over-managed to the point of keeping up with who was playing on the White House tennis court.

#### **'Going Down the Tube'**

His aides could see the presidential nomination "going down the tube," as one of them put it, and they were devastated. But not Bush.

"I don't want to see any long faces and let's don't wring our hands or point fingers," said the vice president, looking around the room at campaign manager Lee Atwater, pollster Robert Teeter, adviser Nicholas Brady, press spokesman Peter B. Teeley, and vice presidential chief of staff Craig Fuller. "Let's sit down and figure out a way to win New Hampshire."

And that's what they did. Bush went on to win New Hampshire with such bare-knuckles attacks on Doie's position on raising taxes that the irascible Senate minority leader finally demanded on national television that the vice president "stop lying about my record."

Bush supporters say the New Hampshire incident, and his combativeness in defending Quayle, reflect a resilience and a coolness under fire that would enable "President Bush" to operate with equanimity in time of crisis or adversity.

Brent Scowcroft, who served as President Gerald R. Ford's national security adviser when Bush was director of the CIA, said: "After Iowa, he kept his cool, revised his strategy and let others implement it. And I can't recall any time when Bush didn't behave well under pressure."

In fact, when he has had something personal at stake, Bush has shown a resourcefulness and determination over the years that have served him well, ranging from his surviving two close calls with death in World War II to emerging—at least so far—relatively unscathed from Iran-Contra and other Reagan Administration scandals.

But when policy issues have been at stake, the vice president does not have a record of battling for policies or positions he cares about. Even his staunchest allies appear to be at a loss to cite anything he has done as vice president during the last 7½ years that would indicate how deeply he feels about any issues or about how he would lead the country.